March 4, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Sen. Ray Basham
PHONE: 517/373-7800

SEN. BASHAM INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO TOUGHEN THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR POLLUTERS
Bill is Part of Package Designed to Help Shift Costs from Taxpayers to Polluters

(Lansing) State Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) announced today that he is introducing legislation which will toughen the reporting requirements for waste discharge polluters. Basham's bill will be part of a four bill package designed to help shift the costs relating to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System from Michigan taxpayers to the polluters themselves.

"At a time when budget problems are forcing state government to eliminate important services, we can no longer give polluters a free ride on the costs relating to the monitoring of their activities," said Basham. "It's not fair to always be asking the taxpayers to pick up the tab for everything."

The four bill package will create a permit fee and establish a water quality fund within the State Treasury that will be used for administration and enforcement of the NPDES system. Michigan is one of only two Great Lakes states- and one of only eight states nationwide- that do not charge any fee for NPDES permit holders.

Sen. Basham's bill will require permit applicants to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Department of Environmental Quality that it has tried to prevent the presence of any contaminants. The bill will also require the details of the application to be made available, in a "user-friendly" format, on the DEQ website.

"I feel our democracy works best when the public has access to as much information as possible," said Sen. Basham. "My bill will make it easier for the general public to monitor who is applying for these permits and what criteria DEQ is using to authorize them."

###